1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 18

their own wards, 'my ward' (*ocitawila cange*). The other villagers will speak only of 'our village' (*imbo lietu*).

There are, in general, two quite different and distinct types of Umbundu village according to the terrain on which they are built. The villages of the plains have room to spread out and tend toward a circular shape, with the dancing floor and men's club house near the centre. The wards may appear as quarters of a single whole or they may be added on in haphazard fashion. The villages of the mountains must conform to the possibilities of the terrain. Formerly, many villages were built on mountains for defence, and capital villages of this type may still be seen with the houses built on ledges and rocks almost one on top of the other. In this type of village, there is often not sufficient or sufficiently good soil for even small garden plots within the palisades. Occasionally one of these mountain villages may be found which has not even room within it for the dancing floor, which will in this case be found outside the palisade. If the site is not too severely confined, the wards of the mountain village tend either to string themselves out horizontally along the mountain-side, or to find successive ledges. The village of Ngendo is of an intermediate type, built as it is, on a slope. Sikilile's village was first built as near the stream as possible. The wards later added themselves on, each a little higher than the one before. The school village, which was built last, got the highest and most hygienic site.

Moving a Village

Villages may be moved for any one of several reasons. When fields are worn out and others are not available[1] near by, a village may be moved to a site more conveniently located. More often, however, the reason assigned is that there has been much illness or death, that the old site is polluted, that its 'air is bad', which to the Ovimbundu means that some action displeasing to the spirits has been committed which has brought on these misfortunes. This will generally have been determined by divination, as will also the spirits' consent to the proposed new site. A site which has long been occupied is of course fertile soil. Since old sites are generally cultivated to good advantage this fact should not be overlooked as a possible additional reason for moving.

[1] Nowadays European settlement often pre-empts such lands.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

A few words from the childhood recollections of Paulino Ngonga Liahuka[1] bring out the facts.

One day we noticed that Sekulu Upalandanda[2] and my father went to the mountain of Kalilonge saying, 'We go to look around (and find out) whether the spirits (*olosande*) have agreed to our moving there.' Then another day we saw that the fathers were coming out of the spirit huts (*atambo*, plural), with the sacred chests (*ovimbangu*, plural), saying, 'We go to start a new village.' When they had arrived under the mountain of Kalilonge, they said, 'The spirits have agreed.' Then when everyone had moved, the elder, whose name had been Upalandanda at Muenesi, now changed his name, declaring, 'I am *Cilembo-camunda* (Shadow of Mountain). From that time the place was called Cilembo.

On seeking a new site the headman's fire in the old village is put out and the procession starts: a girl carries the sacred chest (*ocimbangu*) containing the relics (*ociye*) and the balls of iguana skin, and a boy the sacred bows.[3] They lead the way to the site selected where they cut a pole[4] suitable for a house-wall (*ekoso*), and tie a leaf of the *upu*[5] tree to it, dig a hole into which they put mud made by rain-water (*onata yondombo*),[6] and then together they lift the stick and let it fall into the hole. This is the beginning of the spirit hut (*etambo*), the first house to be built on the new site. The boy and the girl must take part ceremonially in each operation of building the hut. After that they together ignite (*oku tiafula*)[7] the new fire. A hen and a cock are killed, cooked on the new fire, and eaten inside the *etambo* by all who have taken part in the building. The headman and his wife cannot return to the old village but must camp at the new site (*itula*) and keep the new fire alight. In building their houses, the villagers may commute (*oku usala*) from the old site, but often the distance is too great to do this, and

[1] Of Ciyaka, ordained pastor of Elende Church in 1930. He was Hambly's chief informant.

[2] Sekulu Upalandanda was the younger brother of Ngonga's father's father, and therefore grandfather to Ngonga.

[3] The bow (*ekonji*) of each ascendant who is now a guardian spirit (*osande*) of the family.

[4] When this first pole is cut, the axe should first be pointed toward the cardinal directions.

[5] A leaf of the *upu* tree is used in the divorce ceremony. Its use here is a sign of divorce from the old site.

[6] Literally, 'mud of the rainy season'.

[7] This was formerly done with a fire drill (*vide* Hambly, op. cit., Plate XXXV), but not for a number of years now. When I showed the above picture to a group of 150 young men of 17 to 25 years of age, not one of them even knew what it was.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1340) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

It was only with the beginning of World War I that trade in powder and fire-arms was stopped. For more than a century Portuguese patriots and thinkers had been insisting upon the necessity for ending the export of man-power, so evidently impoverishing in its effects on the life of the colony.[1] Law succeeded law, and regulation followed regulation, but there was little real change.[2] With the Republic,[3] however, real changes began. Conditions were investigated,[4] and although complete and immediate reform could hardly have been expected, changes did begin. Provisions for manumission upon presentation to authority were made and carried out. Repatriation from island and mainland plantations began to be undertaken. This was the origin of small communities of Cokue and other 'Ngangela' people now living at various points in the Umbundu country. From the plantations they were repatriated to 'their places of origin', which were, however, not their own homes but the places whence they had been sold into servitude. Under various regulatory practices, contract labour has been continued down to the present day. The depression which came to Central Africa in 1930 reduced the demand to a minimum, and for a few years it did not represent a serious problem in the life of the Ovimbundu. There was a time of great activity in road building (approximately 1915–32) when the demands for labour were a serious problem to Umbundu life. Soon after the opening of World War II a strong demand for colonial products revived the industries of Angola and stimulated the creation of new ones. The consequent demand for labour and the means used to supply it have come to constitute the most severe trial which has yet come to the Ovimbundu. Their docility has made this service bear more hardly on them than on some other people of the colony. Their

[1] e.g. Saldanha da Gama, *Memoria*, 1814; Sá da Bandeira, 1839; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios* (1846), pp. xxxviii, 6 f., 44 f.; Casmiro, *África Nostra*, p. 60 f.

[2] The principal laws were promulgated as follows: 1836 (Formal abolition of the traffic); 1839 (Authorizing co-operation with the international naval squadron); 1840, 1841, 1845 (Supplementary ordinances); 1875 (Law of Liberation and regulation of contract labour); 1878, 1889 (Further regulations); 1899 (Dealing with 'corrective labour'); 1902, 1903 (Further regulation of recruitment).

[3] Proclaimed in Portugal, 5 Oct., 1910.

[4] A Commission came from Lisbon that same year and took testimony throughout the colony. For conditions just previous to the Republic, see Nevinson, op. cit.; C. A. Swan, *The Slavery of To-day* (1909); H. R. F. Bourne, *Slave Traffic in Portuguese Africa* (1908); W. A. Cadbury, *Labour in Portuguese West Africa* (2nd ed. 1910); C. Harding, *In Remotest Barotseland* (1905).

174 169 families, probably for the most part of Lunda origin, entered the Benguella Highlands during the seventeenth century and began to found their respective kingdoms. The tribes whom they encountered appear to have belonged to the cattle-keeping Ndombe-Nganda or to the Ngangela group.(1) Childs suggests that the upper strata of these local populations must have moved on southwards with their cattle to join related stocks in the border regions, while the masses stayed behind to form the nucleus of the Ovimbundu. The cultural influence of these early inhabitants on the Ovimbundu seems to have been slight, except in the south-west, particularly in Kalukembe, where a semblance of the cattle-culture complex remains, together with a recognition of kinship ties with southern neighbours (see below). The linguistic [197] influence of the Southern Bantu (Ndombe-Nganda) group in the south and west has however been considerable. It is noteworthy that over the whole Ovimbundu region a single language has developed with only small dialectal differences, and that although commercial contact has assisted this development, it has not been fostered by political union between the various segments of the Ovimbundu.

TRADITIONS

173 166 Each of the principal groups listed above (page 2) has separate legends of origin. Usually these traditions refer to the birthplace and adventures of the ancestors of the chiefly families, and only mention the indigenous inhabitants. Childs has made a careful and lucid summary of the traditions of the various groups;(2) these are therefore only very briefly outlined below.

Ndulu. There is evidence that Ndulu may be one of the oldest Ovimbundu kingdoms. The progenitor of the ruling dynasty is said to have come from the region near the confluence of the Kwanza and Luando rivers, and to have conquered and expelled the Luimbe, who live today to the east of Ndulu. This migration may have been a result of the prolonged wars between the Portuguese and the Kingdom of Angola,(3) which ended in 1671.

Bailundu. The Bailundu dynasty is said to have its origin in Cipala, a region which remained subject to Bailundu until the end of the nineteenth century, and from which, according to tradition, the king's principal wife comes. Childs estimates the date of the foundation of the dynasty at not earlier than about 1700. The Sambu ruling family is said to descend either from a woman of Bailundu stock or from common stock with the Bailundu.

Viye. Versions of the Viye legend are recorded by Tucker,(4) Serpa Pinto,(5) Silva Porto,(6) and Magyar,(7) and these do not all agree. According to the most widely-known version today, Viye, an elephant-hunter of the Humbi people, tracking game down the Kwanza valley, met and married a princess of the Songo people; their son, Ulundu, founded the Viye chiefdom. From documentary evidence Childs estimates that this must have been in about 1750. This version also suggests that the original inhabitants were of the Ngangela group of tribes.

(1) See above, p.3.
(2) Op.cit., pp.170-81.
(3) To the north of the present Ovimbundu country.
(4) 1927, pp.34f.
(5) 1881, vol.1, pp.156f.
(6) 1942, pp.165-71.
(7) 1859, pp.266f.

7

Magyar's account of the Viye legend is of interest since it suggests a direct link between the movements of the Ovimbundu ancestors and contemporary migrations of the Lunda in the Congo basin and western Angola.(1) Magyar relates that the forefathers of the Viye came from the land of the Moropu (or Lunda(2)) under the two chiefs Kinguri and Schakambindi, conquered the Songo, and settled on the Luanda river, engaging in agriculture between raids. The tribe subsequently sub-divided, one group going southwards to the Kukema river, where Ngangela were living, to found the chiefdom of Viye.

Ngalangi tradition is the only one which attempts a creation myth. Feti, the first chief of Ngalangi, is said to have "come down from above"; having no wives, he went to a lagoon of the Kunene river and caught them as they came out of the reeds. Sons of Feti drove out the Ngangela from what is now Ngalangi country, and founded their principal village.(3) Childs estimates that this must have taken place in about 1750. The village was later attacked unsuccessfully by Ngangela, and this is one of the very few traditions which mention resistance met by the invaders.

Wambu. The first chief, Wambu Kalunga, is said to have come from Sela country, north-west of Bailundu. The Nganda, who now live southwest of Umbundu country and are of Southern Bantu stock, were previously living in Wambu country. The founder of the *Ciyaka* royal family is said to have been a relative of Wambu Kalunga, and to have driven out the Ndombe (also of Southern Bantu stock) from Ciyaka country, probably during the first half of the seventeenth century. Wambu Kalunga is said to have been also the progenitor of the dynasties of *Cingolo, Citata* or *Cikuma, Kalukembe, Elende* and *Ekatete*.(4)

Kakonda, the founder of the Kakonda kingdom, was of northern stock, but born in Ngalangi, whence he was sold as a slave to Benguella. He escaped with his wife, Cilombo, and set up the present kingdom in about 1760.

Cengi, Songa, Namba and *Kasongi* on the northern flank of Bailundu have only recently become Umbundu-speaking. *Kasongi*, one of the largest Bailundu tributaries, has however had a line of Umbundu-speaking chiefs for more than 100 years. *Civulo* was listed by Magyar as tributary to Ciyaka. *Kalukembe* is of interest in that it is more clearly linked than other sections of the Ovimbundu with the Nganda-Ambo group. Factors which point to this closer link include: the similarities in language between the two groups; the inheritance of the Kalukembe kingship in the maternal line, as among the Nganda-Ambo group, and not in the paternal line, as among other Ovimbundu;(5) and the fact that the Nganda-Ambo, who have an exogamous clan organisation, may marry in any of the related Nganda-Ambo groups, and for this purpose include Kalukembe but not other Ovimbundu.(6)

(1) McCulloch 1951, pp.9ff., 32ff., 57ff.
(2) Dias de Carvalho 1890, p.66.
(3) According to the same legend, where the Ngalangi rested their loads of food and household goods, sticks took root and became the sycamore figs which to this day encircle the capital village. This circle of trees is a characteristic of the older Ngangela villages.
(4) Childs op.cit., pp.178, 225.
(5) Although descent among Ovimbundu commoners is in the maternal line.
(6) Childs, op.cit., p.179.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

Some ten years later he was allowed to return to Gumba but died on the way back.

His successor was Simbwyikoka, who was a mother's brother's son of Mbati, that is in Umbundu terminology a 'son'. Umbundu rules of succession allow anybody to succeed to a chiefdom who is paternally or maternally related to a previous chief, whether or not this relationship is genealogically traceable.[3]

Simbwyikoka was apparently nominated to act as regent during Mbati's absence, and as he did not complete the full cycle of chiefly rites he did not have quite the same prestige among the people as a chief in his own right who 'had finished', that is, had gone through all the rites. It was he who was the last ruler of Gumba to send the annual tribute in the form of a sack of fish to Bailundo, since it was a little after the time of his accession that Kandimba[4] (or Njahulu), the last of the Bailundo royal house to have any real authority over the kingdom, died.

Simbwyikoka had lived at the hamlet of Kamballa in Gumba. When he took up office he did not settle at Mbati's village of Katembo, but established, or rather re-established, as a previous chief had ruled there, his capital[5] on the top of the narrow ridge which cuts off the greater part of Gumba from access by road. It was not possible for many people to settle on this site. Accordingly Simbwyikoka encouraged people to settle at the foot of the ridge, swelling the population of an already existing village. This was called Mwekalia from the headman, who held the office of Mwekalia[6] another ministerial title associated with the chiefly court.

In 1938 Simbwyikoka was deposed by the *chefs* for shielding his dependents from the operation of 'contract labour' (administrative recruitment of non-voluntary labour). About 1944

[3] My informants. This means that within (and outside) any sub-chiefdom there are a number of potential heirs who in no way receive any special status or form any kind of corporate group from this fact.

[4] Reigned at Bailundo 1911–35. Childs, p. 229

[5] In Umbundu Ombala, often transcribed in Portuguese as Embala.

[6] For the role of Mwekalia see Hastings, p. 59. His statement that the office is matrilineally inherited was not confirmed by my informants. It seems that it can be inherited either patrilineally or matrilineally. The man who was known as Mwekalia and had been headman of the village of that name did not function as such at the chief's court during my stay. A kinsman of his, Ngombe, acted as Mwekalia at the court of Lusaac.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

Simbwyikoka founded a new village known by his name. In 1951 one of his sons, Sassungu, founded a new village Sassungu whose population originated with a group of people from his father's village. Simbwyikoka maintained contact with Kamballa, where another son, Felisi, lived and herded Simbwyikoka's cattle.

The new chief was Kakope, a son of Tjiweka who had been chief of Gumba at the time of the Muta-ya-Kevela rising. He held office for only two years, being deposed by the *chefe* since ill-health made monthly visits to the post difficult for him. He was succeeded by Kafelo, who came to Gumba from Cassongue across the river. Kafelo was a cross-cousin of Mbati and paternal kinsman of Kakope. Having gone through the cycle of chiefly rites, and undertaken Mbati's funeral he was regarded as being fully chief, in a way that Simbwyikoka was not.

The Epalanga[7] of a chief is a minister chosen from among the chief's kin. Kafelo had nominated to this post Sapapula, a matrilateral 'brother' of his and an inhabitant of Menga. Sapapula moved into Gumba and founded the village of Epalanga in 1945–6, where he was joined by various kinsmen. I have heard the foundation of Epalanga ascribed to another man, Mwehombo, who will be mentioned again, and should therefore be introduced. Mwehombo had been minister at the court of Mbati, his mother's brother. After Mbati's death Mwehombo had stayed at Katembo till 1941, when he settled in Menga with his kinsman Sapapula. Mwehombo crossed over to Gumba in 1944.[8]

In 1954 Kafelo was deposed by the *chefe*, as Kafelo had been drunk in his presence. Kutenga Lusase, who had in 1945 founded the village of Kamupa, saw his chance and told the *chefe* that he had been chosen chief according to custom. The people of Gumba did not complain about this to the post, as they were afraid of the consequences. Kutenga Lusase claimed to be related to Mbati and Simbwyikoka and was a matrilateral 'grandson' of Tjiweka. He was not related to Kafelo whose link to Tjiweka was a patrilateral one.

Kutenga Lusase was in his turn deposed by the *chefe* in 1956

[7] Hastings, p. 53.

[8] Information from his 'brother', Luanga.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

CHIEFS AND HEADMEN IN GUMBA

The tasks of recruiting contract labourers and road-workers and of getting fines and taxes paid, and such other duties as the arranging of compulsory purchase of tickets for the travelling cinema (showing patriotic films) are carried out through a long process of argument, attempted evasion, and pressure, between the chief, the government headmen, and the locally influential people, traditional headmen, catechists, and anyone else who can get himself listened to. Persons actually picked for contract labour or road work may make quite a fuss about it, but as such numbers are recruited it is ultimately accepted resignedly. It is not really practicable for a chief to discriminate in favour of his kinsman owing to the heavy demands for labour and the likelihood of such discrimination being reported at the post, as happened to Simbwyikoka. Demands for labour may fall heavily on some households. Thus one Epalanga household consisted of a man, his daughter by an earlier marriage, his wife and her baby daughter. The man had been taken for contract labour, his wife had been called to road work, and the adolescent daughter was carrying sisal[14] to the post. A kinsman of the household head attempted to arrange for some watch to be kept over the gardens lest animals should get in.

There were four government headmen in Gumba during my stay. Theoretically they are village headmen. The villages in which official records group Ovimbundu do not conform to the actual villages in which Ovimbundu live. Anybody moving from one village to another has to pay a fee; as the Ovimbundu move about quite frequently and no attempt is made to enforce this rule locally, the result is this discrepancy between paper and real villages.

The government headman's duties are those already described for the chief. As with the chief, there is only sufficient backing from the post for him to carry out the orders he receives; he does not receive power to enable him to exercise political leadership and judicial authority at the local level, nor is he a representative of the post in the villages. His interests and values are linked to those of his neighbours rather than to the post. It is through the chief and the government headmen

[14] Some villages are obliged to grow sisal and take it to the post without payment.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[Village of Epalanga]

cluster was much more autonomous *vis-à-vis* Sapapula than were the members of the Mbati-Mwehombo grouping through the more numerous and closer kin ties; yet it would be wrong to regard Ndjoleya's kin as isolated.[4] This greater autonomy was a matter of degree rather than kind.

With regard to geographical origin, it is evident that the population had been recruited from over quite a wide area. Of the 36 household heads 7 were born in Cela of whom 6 had come from Cela to Gumba, and 1 had been born in Cela, then come to Gumba, then moved to Menga and then returned to Gumba. 3 household heads had come from Utende to Gumba, and 2 had come from Namba. 12 had come to Epalanga from Cassongue. 7 household heads (including 2 who had subsequently lived in Cassongue) had at one time lived in Katembo (the village associated with Mbati). 1 householder was apparently born in Gumba but had no Katembo link. 2 household heads were from Ndjandju (one having lived in Cassongue after leaving Ndjandju, the other being the catechist) and 1 was from Chicunda. On the origins of 5 household heads I have no information.

My information on Epalanga suffers from a number of gaps. Some genealogical information collected was lost. Too frequently I neglected to ask if a particular relationship was patrilateral or matrilateral, nor did I enquire sufficiently as to whether particular marriages were between kinsfolk or not.

These deficiencies to some extent 'fit' the kinship system. A kinship tie may exist between two people which is significant in the social relations between them, yet they may not be sure as to whether it is patrilateral or matrilateral, or even as to what is the category of kinship involved. Thus a resident of Simbwyikoka's village told me one day that Simbwyikoka was his 'brother', some time later he was a brother-in-law, and after this again said that he was a 'brother'.

There is also confusion over pedigrees. The pedigree which Simbwyikoka gave me in December 1955 differed from the one that he gave me in April 1956. Two people who claim to be

[4] Ndjoleya once referred to himself as *Osekulu yimbo* (elder of the *imbo*) this being a case of *imbo* used for a cluster within a village. Ndjoleya's folk recognised Sapapula as being head of the village.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

582 621 their marriage also fits a general pattern of Umbundu marriage, a choice made within a limited range joining together individuals of different kinship cores.

The multiplication of ties and their concentration within a neighbourhood by this means do not prevent a man from having kin and affines a day or two's journey away. It has earlier been indicated that the population of Epalanga was from quite a wide area. Yet the consequences of previous preferential marriages (thus Paulo and Saviel were related both patrilaterally and matrilaterally) and the trend towards the establishment of new marriage ties had created a complicated mesh of linkages that has been described within a not particularly stable village population, whose senior residents had been there for only ten years. To use again the anthropological metaphor of kinship as a network, the network can have odd strings running out quite a way, but in a village the different ties will be bound up in a knot.

602 166 The long-range ties (with such obvious exceptions as those with kin living in cities) are not the result of the range of kin spreading wider and wider under modern conditions. The evidence of pedigrees indicates that kinship and marriage links between individuals in, and actual migration to and from Gumba and Cassongue, Cela, and Namba, date back well into the nineteenth century. There is far less evidence of connections and migration between Gumba and areas to the south and east. This geographical aspect of social relations persists at the present day.

621 It has been indicated that the high proportion of preferential marriages creates a certain local stability, since many marriages are with people living close to. Yet the basic stability lies not so much in the relative stability of a local population, but in the pattern by which links of distant kinship are changed into marriage ties and new bonds are speedily established among the fortuitously assembled population of a new village.

4. *Headmen and Kinship Cores*

622 I now turn to the other principle of village integration, the settling of individuals near senior kinsmen. In the previous

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

CHAPTER VI

THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL

797 Both the Catholic and Protestant missions have, in order to provide religious teaching and leadership at the village level, made use of catechists whose responsibility it is to prepare people for baptism and children for Communion by teaching them catechism, to lead the village people in prayers, and to maintain contact with the missions. There are a number of differences between the roles of the Catholic and the Protestant catechists. As most of the Christians in my immediate neighbourhood were Catholics, I shall deal in this chapter with the Catholic catechists, though I shall indicate some of the differences which the Protestant organization shows.

[166] In the early days large numbers of Christians settled round the missions. The first Catholic converts were slaves purchased from traders by the missionaries and settled in villages near the missions. While the Protestant missions did not do this, they were somewhat embarrassed by the large crowds of converts who settled round mission stations.[1] The missions expanded by sending out catechists who gathered converts. At one time the practice was for the Christians to settle in a 'school village', which was in fact a hamlet partially separated from the rest of the village from which its membership was recruited. This is still found in some Gumba villages. In other villages, however, there is no geographical division between Christian and pagan, and the school may occupy a central position in the lay-out of the village. There are as yet no purely Catholic villages in Gumba. These are established by the missionaries when there is considered to be a significant number of Catholic married couples. This pattern is followed even on the outskirts of Nova Lisboa.

797 361

[1] Childs, p. 66.